MRS. → MERTINENE

A Nissan automobile owned by _____ ~~**Mertinas,**~~ daughter of Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas was stolen in Vilnius this week. Mertinas told reporters that she was glad nobody shot at her.

SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTER IN LITHUANIA. Lena Hjelm-Wallem, in Vilnius for a two-day visit, met with President Algirdas Brazauskas, Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius, Foreign Minister Povilas Gylys, and members of the parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee on 24 January. The talks focused on the eastward expansion of the European Union, Sweden's possible role in assisting Lithuania become an associate member, and dropping visa requirements between the two countries. The two foreign ministers signed an agreement on mutual assistance in customs activities. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

LATVIAN FOREIGN MINISTER IN WASHINGTON. On 12 January, Latvian Foreign Minister Valdis Birkavs on 12 January held talks with US Secretary of State Warren Christopher on topics including the expansion of NATO and the situation in Chechnya. On that day, Birkavs and US trade representative Mickey Kantor signed an agreement on mutual investment protection. Birkavs also met with several Republican Senators. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

ESTONIA NOT TO GRANT ASYLUM TO HIGHJACKER. The Estonian government on 19 January decided it will not grant political asylum to Vladimir Bozhko. The 36-year-old locksmith from Vorkuta hijacked a Russian plane en route to St. Petersburg in mid-November, demanding to be flown to Denmark. After the plane landed in Tallinn, he surrendered peacefully and released all the passengers and crew, When Russia asked for Bozhko's extradition on 25 November, he requested asylum and threatened to kill himself if turned over to Russia. Estonia is deciding when and how to transfer Bozhko to Russia. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.